various issues concerning the drug policy viz; ensuring abundant availability at reasonable prices within the country of good quality essential pharmaceuticals of mass consumption and strengthening the indigenous capability for cost effective quality production.

(c) and (d) Yes, Government has decided to set up NIPER at six locations *i.e.*, Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Hajipur (Bihar), Kolkata (West Bengal), Guwahati (Assam) and Rae Bareli (UP). These institutes would provide Masters and Doctoral level courses in pharmaceutical field. These institutes would produce highly qualified and trained technical manpower to suit the needs of pharmaceutical industry in the present global scenario.

Price of medicines

2658. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government have taken so far to reduce prices of generic medicines;

(b) whether Government have issued instructions to pharmaceutical companies to put MRP labels (both in English and Hindi) pertaining to essential life saving drugs; and

(c) whether keeping in view of drugs intended for public health programmes, Government have fixed/revised prices of bulk drugs and formulation packs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) In India, Generic medicines are considered to be those which are sold through trade channels without involving medical representatives. The trade margin of these medicines is usually very high to cover the marketing expenses by the traders. It is proposed to streamline the system of trade margins through the proposed National Pharmaceuticals Policy, 2006. Draft National Pharmaceutical Policy was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 11.1.2007. The Cabinet has referred the Policy to Group of Ministers (GOM). The First meeting of the GOM was held on 10.4.2007. No time frame has been set for finalizing the National Pharmaceutical Policy.

Eleven pharma companies had agreed to voluntarily reduce prices in respect of 886 medicines on packs manufactured after 2nd October, 2006. A survey of the prices of these medicines in selected cities was got done through a pharma PSUs on 25-8-2007 and feedback was also received from some of the companies. As per findings of this survey, out of 886 medicines, 472 medicines with reduced prices are available in Delhi market.

(b) Bilingual labelling is not mandafory for medicines. However Pharma industry was requested to print names of the medicine, manufacturing date, expiry date and MRP in Hindi in addition to the existing system of English. Though the action of Pharma companies on this request of bilingual labels has been proposed to be voluntary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been requested to amend the

Drugs and Cosmetics Rules to make it compulsory. Pharma PSUs and many Private Sector companies have already started affixing bilingual labels to their products.

(c) The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price control and their prices are fixed/revised by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in accordance with the provisions of the DPCO, 95. The price fixation/revision of the Scheduled Drugs and formulations is a continuous process under DPCO, 95. In case of any violation of the price fixed by NPPA, action for recovery of overcharging amount is taken by NPPA.

In case of non-Scheduled formulations NPPA monitors price increase on the basis of ORG IMS data. NPPA only monitors the price movement and if there is any price increase by more than 10% in one year and the annual turnover of the formulation pack exceeds Rs.1 crore, further, the share of the formulator in the segment of the formulation is required to be at least 20% of the market or the medicine is first 3 top medicines of that group. The case is take up for further examination and if required prices are fixed in public interest under Para 10(b) of DPCO, 95,. So far 30 companies have reduced the price of 51 packs as a result of the intervention of NPPA/Government. NPPA have fixed the price of 20 packs under Para 10(b) of DPCO, 95.

Lifting of levy sugar lying with mills

2659. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for the first time in 25 years, nearly 10 lakh tonnes of levy sugar is lying with mills in Maharashtra unlifted by Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the release mechanism prevents sugar mills from selling levy sugar in the open market even in the current glut situation without prior permission of the Centre; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to lift the stock of levy sugar lying in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) During the sugar season 2006-07 (October - September), 6.54 lac tons of levy sugar has been allotted to the sugar mills of Maharashtra. As such, the question of 10 lac tons of levy sugar lying unlifted with the sugar mills of Maharashtra should not arise.

(b) and (c) No sugar mill in the country can sell levy sugar in the open market without getting it converted into non-levy sugar and without permission of the Central Government. The Cane Commissioners/Director of Sugars of all sugar producing states have been requested to furnish information on unlifted levy sugar stock with sugar factories in their respective states. Further action in the matter shall be taken after receipt of requisite information from them.